

**Public Notice for 401 Certification
Healdsburg Veterans Memorial Beach**

On March 21, 2003 the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Ms. Michelle Julene, on behalf of Sonoma County Regional Parks (County), requesting approval for disturbances to waters of the State and other water quality impacts associated with the development of the proposed project.

The Healdsburg Veterans Memorial Beach (HMB) is constructed each year for the summer recreation season. The beach area that is impacted by the project is approximately 350 feet long and 35 feet wide, for a total of 0.28 acres. Before Memorial Day weekend the beach is graded and sand (stockpiled from the previous year) is spread out over the beach. A single buoy line is installed in the Russian River, but the flashboards on the dam are not installed. After Memorial Day weekend, the beach is closed while construction is finished. Traditionally, local river gravel is scraped up to form a berm at the bottom of the beach. The berm is used to prevent any sand from sliding into the river. Imported, clean beach sand is then spread over the rest of the beach. Additional buoys and safety lines are installed, as well as lifeguard stands. On June 26, the flashboards are added to the dam, bringing the water level up to provide a swimming area. The beach is reopened for the July 4th weekend, and is closed after Labor Day weekend. After closure, the flashboards are gradually removed to lower the water level. Once the final flashboard is out, the beach sand is moved back up the beach into a stockpile area. Traditionally the gravel berm would not be removed, and it would be washed away during high flows.

There are two issues of concern which the Regional Water Board is discussing with the County. First, the gravel berm has traditionally been allowed to wash away during high flows, but this local gravel contains sediments which will also be washed into the river. Second, the project description does not include any erosion control measures for the graded area after the close of the summer season. These issues are being addressed, and a minor modification of the project description will probably occur.

The disposition of CEQA has not been determined at this time. The California Department of Fish and Game issued a permit on March 12, 2002. Furthermore, the applicant is in consultation with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries (formerly National Marine Fisheries Service) and the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

At this time the Regional Water Board is in the process of reviewing the proposed project regarding the issuance of the 401 Certification Permit. In addition, the Regional Water Board will consider all comments received during a 21-day comment period that begins on the first date of issuance of this letter. If you have any questions or comments, please contact staff member Lauren Hocker by email at hockl@rb1.swrcb.ca.gov, or send comments to NCRWQCB, 5550 Skylane Blvd., Suite A, Santa Rosa, CA 95403.